

Jennifer Kotesich, Project Officer
Division of Medicaid Expansion Demonstrations
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

September 13, 2016

RE: Comments on 1115 Demonstration Amendment NH Health Protection Program Premium Assistance project #11-W-00298/1

Dear Ms. Kotesich:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on 1115 Demonstration Amendment NH Health Protection Program Premium Assistance project #11-W-00298/1. The continuation of the NH Health Protection Program is important to Housing Action NH and its member organizations. I would like to state my opposition to the proposed enhanced requirements regarding citizenship verification.

Citizenship Verification

Based on an extensive history of working with those experiencing homelessness in NH, I am advocating for the removal of the need for two forms of identification. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are some of the most vulnerable people in our state. NH's homeless often have very little income and significant health challenges, including severe mental illness and substance use disorders. Given their inherent day-to-day instability it is often challenging for them to secure one form of identification. Experience has proven that requiring two forms of identification will certainly challenge their ability to access Medicaid coverage and thus create an undue burden to access the NH Health Protection Program.

Since the launch of the NH Health Protection Program, I know that almost 4,300 people who have used NH's homeless shelter system have been successfully enrolled in Medicaid. The stress of instability and/or living in places unfit for human habitation can exacerbate health challenges and generate high public costs through law enforcement and uncompensated health care delivery. Access to health care in addition to supportive housing services can transition the homeless to secure living environments and significantly improve health outcomes and decrease public costs. I urge you to modify the citizenship verification requirements to ease entry for those with no access to proof of citizenship.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barry Quimby –Homeless Outreach Supervisor
Center for Life Management

